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Consultant

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Dear Elvin:

I received the letter from Clyde Stormont (herewith enclosed) with your quite appropriate reply to Stormont's "How in the hell did you know that?" as follows, "That's easy, Phil's been phoning everyone!" You see I have changed considerably since you were my consultant in the late 40's and early 50's - I have since learned how to communicate and this I do very well. Indeed, this is one of the few areas about which I can plead guilty and yet be mighty proud of it too, because I am also a good listener.

As for your remark at the City University affair about my having only one case - here is a copy of appropriate sheets taken from a grant application which is self-explanatory. Actually you have stimulated me to prepare an article about "Only One Case". I have two such in my record: (1) Levine & Stetson, JAMA 1939, (2) Levine et al, Proc.Soc.Exp.Biol.& Med. 1951 (This paper was rejected in Science). These led me to search for other firsts.

You probably saw a description of the Rous' sarcoma published in J.Exp.Med. 1910 and republished with original pagination in the November 1979 issue of the same JEM. The following year he demonstrated the first example of the viral nature of this type of malignancy. In 1909 Landsteiner published the first example of the viral nature of polio. These two examples demonstrate the old maxim "from little acorns, great oak trees grow". When I have the time, I'll surely find many more examples of "firsts" from which major advances emerged.

For several years I have been aware of the fact that you have been more and more occupied with very important tasks of correlating the species specific genetic markers and their amino acid sequences. (incidentally, I received the recent booklet in which your outstanding work is documented).

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All of this reminds me that by virtue for your superb training with Michael and your work with Tiselius you have been primarily an immunochemist and thus you require highly exacting physical and/or chemical measurements. However, it is the biologist who with his wide scope and broad outlook can take the big jump required to open wide areas for further exploration. This I first learned from Landsteiner who in 1925 or 1926 informed me that the great discoveries of the future will be made in areas where one or more disciplines border on others. This I have never forgotten even though many years elapsed before I applied this principle especially in the years following my first official retirement.

Currently I am now in a very exciting area in which I am attempting to establish in my 1951 patient that the biologic test injection of 25ml incompatible blood invoked activation of macrophages, phagocytic monocytes and lymphokines. The release of their secretions, some or many of them pyrogens and their enzymes, have the property of penetrating areas of foreign illegitimate tissue and incompatible blood. Thus scavengers become available to rid the body of anything foreign (see the papers of Zanvil Cohn and Tony Allison)* The result of it all is that I now have animal models to study metastasis and their prevention with the enthusiastic support of Josh Fidler.

Elvin, this is a long letter and I am risking the possibility that this and the accompanying papers will suffer the fate of the waste basket. As you know, I have long been your admirer and gained much from our old contacts at Ortho. You must be aware of the fact that in the scientific world you have the reputation of that of a rare man of total integrity.

And so, in the spirit of Gilbert and Sullivan, the night has been long and ditto my song - and thank goodness, they are both of them over.

Kindest regards.

Sincerely yours,


Philip Levine, M.D., F.R.C.P.

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enc.

*Zanvil Cohn papers in enclos
Tony Allison's papers in Int. J. in Review, Exp. Path
18, 1978 Ed C. W. Richter (an excellent paper)*